



# Arizona Department of Agriculture

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## ***PRESS RELEASE***

### ***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

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## Technology to Improve Arizona Fruit/Vegetable Inspections

### **USDA announces pilot program to allow ADA to utilize new inspection technology**

(Phoenix, AZ) – Fresh produce inspections and calculations in Phoenix will utilize state of the art software and laptop computers rather than the traditional pen and paper thanks to a pilot program recently announced by the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). The USDA announced today that Arizona would be the first state ever to implement the electronic inspection process for fresh fruit and vegetables, known as “FEIRS”.

“In a time when Arizonan’s are paying more attention to food safety and quality, this technology is a big step forward in providing timely and accurate inspections for fruits and vegetables” said Arizona Governor Janet Napolitano who had urged USDA to allow Arizona to use FEIRS.

Until now this process, known as the Fresh Electronic Inspection Reporting/Resource System (FEIRS), has only been utilized in Federal Terminal Markets. The Arizona Department of Agriculture (ADA) is the first non-federal agency to be allowed to utilize the FEIRS software. This technology will allow ADA inspections to be more efficient, accurate, concise, and user-friendly, which will be beneficial to growers, shippers, and ultimately consumers.

“This technology will save our inspectors approximately fifteen minutes per inspection” said Donald Butler, Director of the Arizona Department of Agriculture, “and for a department that conducted 39,000 fruit and vegetable inspections last year, that is very significant.”

Although the pilot program is currently only for Phoenix, Arizona, the Arizona Department of Agriculture (ADA) hopes to expand it to Nogales by spring of 2008 for the start of grape season when the Department inspects thousands of shipments of grapes coming from Mexico.

The ADA plans on having this pilot program up and running in Phoenix by October.